

# THE OMEN

**VOLUME 58, ISSUE 1**

*Special Horse Edition!*



IN THIS ISSUE...

Speak:

- Leo dumps again... [p.5](#)
- Carl Jung’s theory of personality... [p.7](#)
- I am cold without a home... [p.8](#)
- The Shart of Being Normal... [p.11](#)
- vocal necromancy... [p.14](#)
- The Re-Remaking of a College, Chapter 1... [p.16](#)
- We Adopted 5 Children But 4 of Them Died... [p.20](#)
- Do Dogs Go to Heaven... [p.22](#)
- a needlessly complicated story about developing musical taste (part 2)... [p.23](#)
- Replication and Revolution in Psychology Reading List... [p.24](#)

Lies:

- Fun Gender-Neutral Terms of Endearment... [p.28](#)

Hate:

- The Zhang-Poggi Substance Compass... [p.30](#)

Horse:

- Teddy’s super cool omen submission... [p.31](#)

Staff Box: (In order of appearance)

- Zuki: 413-559-5424
- Alice: \*
- Connor: 80085
- Riley: \*
- Teddy: nooo don’t come in
- Jay: blargh
- Leo: --- --- --- / .. - / - ..... / -..... -..... -..... -.....
- Nicholas: 413
- Willow: baaaaaahhhhhhhh
- Zipper: 42069
- J: 80085
- Jordan: \*
- Casper: oo  
oo  
oo (hold until someone opens)

Front Cover: Jay Poggi and Leo Zhang  
Back Cover: J.E. Cramer

Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in any format (no PDFs please) by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, or email. Get your submissions to [omen@hampshire.edu](mailto:omen@hampshire.edu), the Omen Office, Leo’s mailbox (1593), or Jay’s mailbox (0370).

\*we forgot [skull emoji]

Policy

The Omen is an every-other-week-ly publication that is the world’s only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we’ll publish it all, and we’re happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire’s longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you’re submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can’t promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish.

Your submission must include the name you use around campus: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Friday nights in the basement of Merrill in the company of a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don’t bite. You can find the Omen every other Monday in Saga, the post office, online at <http://expelallo.men>, and just about any other place we can find to put it.

Find all issues here!



THE OFFICIAL OMEN HAIKU:

Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff’s views (5)

EDITORIAL

[omen@hampshire.edu](mailto:omen@hampshire.edu)

by Leo Zhang and Jay Poggi

Hi everyone! Welcome back to another ooey-goey, potion-saucy, freshly brewed issue of The Omen. As long-time readers will know, the Spring semester marks a sort of annual metamorphosis for The Omen, in which it transforms from a yucky little guy to a slime-slinging beast of unspeakable putridity. Here’s a rundown of what you can expect this semester:

Our next issue (to be printed 2/14) will mark the return of our venerable **Erotica Issue**. Occuring every St. Valentine’s Day, the Erotica Issue separates itself from ordinary ones in two crucial ways: Firstly, as the name implies, erotic media accounts for the vast majority of the issue’s girth; secondly, all submissions will be entered into **The Trial of Fuck-Monarchy**, a contest held to determine which of Hampshire’s sauciest sex-ists shall join the ranks of Fuck-Nobility from years past. The winner, chosen by a council of expert sex-scholars (known as Sex Judges), will be coronated with a \$30 gift card to *Oh My!*, the Valley’s premier sensuality shop. If you have even a passing interest in writing (or drawing) the sort of thing that could conceivably turn on some freak somewhere, send it to [omen@hampshire.edu](mailto:omen@hampshire.edu) before 2/12. If you have a discerning eye for high quality sexual content, consider applying to be one of the Sex Judges responsible for choosing our newest Fuck Monarch. Send all applications to [omen@hampshire.edu](mailto:omen@hampshire.edu).

What else can you expect from us this semester? Not much in terms of quality, but in terms of quantity, we’ve fucking got you. Midway through the semester, we will be publishing what we call The Cringe Issue. *But The Omen is always cringe!* I can hear you protesting. Well, yes, that is true. But The Cringe (Affectionate) Issue is a special issue aiming to celebrate all that cringe culture wants to squash, as a new yearly tradition in honor of the first time Sans Undertale and Tsuyuki Asano (my OC; don’t look him up because you will see no important results besides a single dentist\*) met. It will be an issue for the self inserts, the fanfiction, the fanart of you and your favorite character making out. It will be an issue for the Homestuck essays and Danganronpa opinion pieces. If you’re worried about somehow being “too cringe” for The Cringe (Affectionate) Issue, don’t worry. I will always have something even more cringe lined to make you seem normal in comparison. All sorts of self-indulgent cringe will be accepted, and praised. We’ll be holding our Cringe Layout for The Cringe (Affectionate) Issue on 3/10, and the issue will be published after we return from Spring Break. Submit your cringe (affectionate) content to [omen@hampshire.edu](mailto:omen@hampshire.edu) anytime between now and the end of Spring Break; just make sure to specify that it’s for The Cringe (Affectionate) Issue either in the subject line of your email or in the body, so we know that it’s not just regular ol’ Omen Cringe.

Also, we have a color issue! It’s basically what it says on the tin. Normally we print our issues in black and white, but for one (1) issue a year, we will print in color! So send us your pretty pictures, or art that you’re proud of, or memes that you’re not proud of, or make the layout process a living nightmare for us by using all sorts of funky fonts and colors. The layout for the color issue will be on 4/21, and the issue will be printed on 4/25. Just like with The Cringe (Affectionate) Issue, you can send your color issue submissions to [omen@hampshire.edu](mailto:omen@hampshire.edu) at any time between now and the weekend of 4/21, just specify somewhere in your email that it’s for the color issue so we don’t end up printing your nice color things in ugly black and white.



Lastly, I (it’s Jay now) am doing an independent study on *The Omen*’s potential as a vehicle for student advocacy. I’ll be writing an essay for each issue as part of a series I’m calling “The Re-Remaking of a College,”<sup>1</sup> proposing improvements Hampshire could make to its academic structure. You can find the first of these essays, which addresses how Hampshire can better support students in pursuing extracurricular activities, on page 16. If you have ideas for how Hampshire can become a better school, I encourage you to write about it in *The Omen*. Staff and faculty really do read this thing, as crazy as that sounds.

\*I looked up “tsuyuki asano” on both Ecosia (mistake) and Google (not mistake) to fact-check myself and could not find this fucking dentist anywhere. I know he existed when I looked up “tsuyuki asano” out of curiosity a few months ago but now I can’t find any evidence that he is real. Tsuyuki Asano, DDS has been lost to the sands of fucking time and it’s messing with me. Where is this fucking dentist??? I’m going crazy but like please believe me guys Tsuyuki Asano, DDS absolutely did exist at the end of 2022

# PENIS BLAST

<sup>1</sup> Thanks, Nicholas :)

you just got PENIS BLASTED by leo! tag  
your friends to totally PENIS BLAST them



# SECTION SPEAK

uguuuuuuuuugu (<— sound of me crying)

(Untitled)

by Leo Zhang

Recently, I reread Joan Didion’s piece, “On Keeping a Notebook.” The first time I read it was for a class, and the second time I read it was for the same class, except I’m now the TA for said class. I don’t think I really fully appreciated the piece when I read it a year ago, and though I appreciate it more now, it’s one of those things (as is the case with most literature, I’ve found) that you gain more and more appreciation for over time, and upon several subsequent revisits. That all being said, something that caught my eye on this reread was when Didion said, “Only the very young and the very old may recount their dreams at breakfast, dwell upon self, interrupt with memories of beach picnics and favorite Liberty lawn dresses and the rainbow trout in a creek near Colorado Springs. The rest of us are expected, rightly, to affect absorption in other people’s favorite dresses, other people’s trout.”

To someone else, I’m not sure if this line would invoke as much thought and introspection as it did for me. I couldn’t help but agree with Didion wholeheartedly—yes, that is true. Only certain populations of people are ‘allowed’ to do certain things, like recount their dreams, without it being seen as odd. Why is that?

It made me remember a friend I’d had for, in total, about a month at the beginning of the last school year. In the short time we knew each other, we got dinner, laughed about classes, and shared secrets. We both liked watching the moon, so one night we sat together under the moon and told each other about our childhood traumas. I didn’t see him again after that. I invited him to my birthday party, but he was out of town, and when my birthday was over I didn’t hear from him again, either. I only learned from another friend of mine that he’d thought it was weird when I told him through giggles that he’d shown up in one of my dreams recently, and while I never confirmed if this was the reason for his sudden distance, I have to assume it was.

I don’t remember how I reacted to this information at the time. What I feel now is something quite like grief. I still don’t fully understand why what I did was as bad as it was, but I do understand that ever since then, I’ve avoided talking about my dreams to all but a few people.

The thing is, I’m kind of lost. I don’t really know how to show love besides telling people when I think about them. None of the majorly accepted love languages are mine; instead of physical touch or gift giving, my love language is more like, *Mentioning you to other people when you’re not around*. It’s all I really can do. Telling people about when I dreamt about them was a sort of offshoot of that, and when that was taken away (or rather, when I buried it), I was left floundering, sort of. If I couldn’t find safety in telling people ‘I love you’ through telling them about my dreams, I wasn’t quite sure if *any* of the ways I say ‘I love you’ are acceptable.

I feel like I have to clarify that when I say ‘I love you,’ I don’t necessarily mean it romantically, or even platonically. It isn’t necessarily personal, but rather conceptual. I say I love you in the same way I love good food and good music and flowers after winter: a sense of peace, of comfort—I’m glad you’re here, and I’m glad I’m here to witness you. That sort of thing. It’s simple enough to me, but I’ve come to realize that not everyone understands my language the way I do, and sometimes things get lost in translation.

Sometimes people won't bother to put in the time to understand, and I can't really fault them for that; whether it's my tendency to be forgiving to a fault or my self consciousness arguing that I'm not worth that time and effort, I struggle to be accusatory towards the people who drop me. So instead I pick up the slack on my end, and now I give in to my paranoia about what could be seen as overstepping boundaries, about what could be seen as annoying or burdensome, and I work 24/7 to avoid those scenarios.

See, my paranoia walks at my side like an old dog, and I've been more inclined to listen to him recently. He's always been here to warn me about possible bad situations of my own creation, situations that could come of assuming closeness or oversharing information or—and this one really sucks—just being too happy, because my joy is sometimes unpalatable to be around. I can't remember much of my childhood, but I can safely assume that I must have lost some friends, must have been made fun of enough to get it into my brain that to be off guard equals an instant path to trouble. That I cannot relax, ever, or else I'll get myself into another situation where someone is trapped by my overbearing, needy, annoying energy, and the last thing I want is for anyone to feel trapped by me. But as I've grown, and as I've met more people, I've slowly begun to lower those defenses and precautions, because around certain people, I don't need them. It just so happens that life sucks sometimes, though, and after I make a mistake and drive another person off, I go back to how I was before. My old dog starts barking again.

It's why I don't tell people when they appear in my dreams. It's why I ask others about their story universes but rarely share much about my own. It's why I never ask for the aux, and why I cover my mouth when I laugh. It's why I don't like telling people when something makes me uncomfortable. All of these fears, topics of conversation walled off from outsiders, can be traced back to specific points in my life where I let my dog too far off his leash, and he got kicked. I was asking too much, requiring too much, assuming too much, even though I didn't think I was asking or requiring or assuming anything at all. Clearly I must have been, though, because why else would someone say that to me if it wasn't true?

It's a juvenile way of thinking, I know. When I was younger I would've thought this kind of thought process—"learning" from experiences and changing myself for the better—is the sign of maturity surpassing that of my peers. Now I know that it's a sign of a fragile self-image, one that's dominated by what other people want of me, and it's a sign that I am not a fully realized Person. Not yet, not completely. And yet I can't help myself from feeding the dog, so to speak. Sometimes I have to ask myself why it would be so bad to be seen as annoying. Why would it be so bad to be disliked? Is that not an indication of someone who is unique, and comfortable in their skin, and content? And then I go back to feeding my dog.

We are all less of a collection of everything that has happened to us, and more of an amalgamation of everything that we perceive has happened to us. That is what Didion's piece seems to say; at the very least, that's what I read in her words. My perception of reality is shaky at best, so I don't know if it's safer to think that I've overreacted to something meaningless and trivial, or to think that I haven't overreacted at all, and that I've been mistreated on a minor scale for my entire life. Whatever the "truth" is, I know for a fact that the way I perceived all of these maybe-meaningless, maybe-trivial, maybe-just-as-bad-as-I-thought events has caused me to build walls and dig moats. My anxious energy surrounding the concept of talking too much about things that make me happy is a result of the way I've perceived my life. My conviction that my mental illnesses are an attention-grab is a result of the way I've perceived my life. Those perceptions, whether true to reality or not, have shaped the way I interact with the world in an indelible way.

Despite what this piece may make it sound like, I don't particularly dislike myself. I sort of exist in a limbo state where everything I do is an attempt to keep myself from becoming someone I dislike. Keeping with the dog metaphor, I would very much like to live in a world where I'm not horribly paranoid about everything I do, but that would require my dog to die first, and I get attached to animals easily. But, like all living things, a dog must die at some point, so I know that for me, there is a concrete end waiting

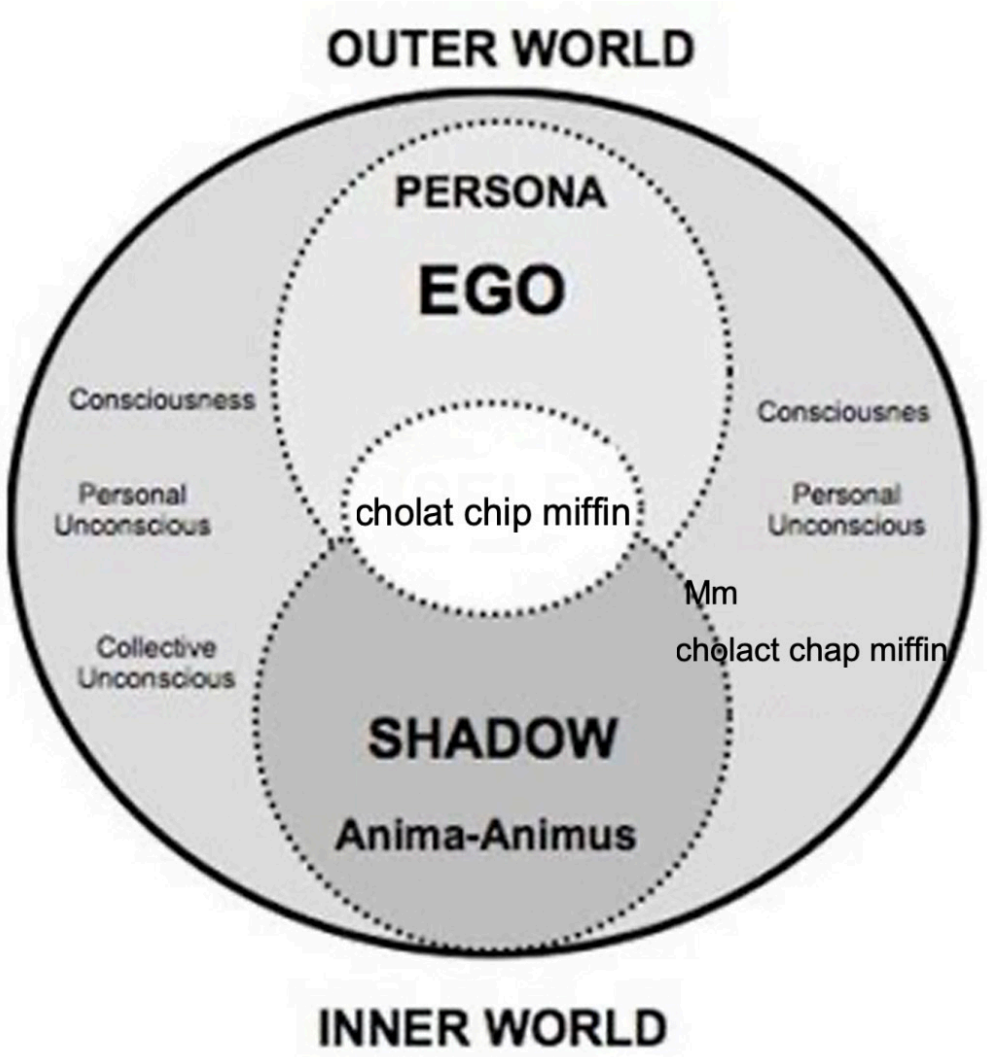
down the road. I'm just not sure whether I should walk or run there. Walking takes longer, but running is tiring—you know the deal.

Or, maybe, instead of waiting for my dog to die, he'll disappear once people start to understand why he's so scared. That his over-cautiousness is not his fault, but a result of looking weirder than people are used to dogs looking, and that looking weirder than "normal" isn't his fault, either. Maybe all he's ever wanted is to be understood, and if he is me and I am him, then what does that mean? I said earlier that I can't really fault people for not understanding, or not trying to understand, but maybe that was a lie.

I'm trying to think of what the point is in writing this. Maybe there isn't one. Maybe I'm just using The Omen as a journal instead of actually keeping a journal. Maybe I just wanted people to hear about the rapid but gentle decay of one of my friendships, something that I haven't talked about in nearly a year, and maybe I wanted people to see how friendships can fall apart in such anticlimactic ways, and maybe I wanted people to know that even when there's no drama, decay still hurts... Among a score of other things.

Or maybe—and this is the theory I'm most convinced by—maybe I just wanted to submit something to The Omen that wasn't a Tsuyuki meme. And, well, this sure isn't a Tsuyuki meme, so I guess I accomplished what I wanted. Thanks for reading, everyone, and remember to be kind to yourself, get a good night's sleep, and pet your dogs. 🐕

Carl Jung's theory of personlity, by Malfoy Kimmel





# I am cold without a home

by Zukiswa Mbalenhle Mhlongo

The closest thing I have ever seen to snow are the flakes caused by my sebaceous dermatitis. They flow so abundantly from my scalp. I tightly bind my head in coverings and scarves instead of shaving my head, so as not to risk losing my feeble grasp on femininity. Everything seems to slip through my grasp in these cold New England days. Things such as warmth and time and love. In comparison, there is no relief from the things that I wish to shake off, such as the anxious trembling, the tired cold, and most importantly, the disgusting flakes. The first two feel like permanent aspects of my existence, like oddly comforting validations of my internal anguish. The last element however, is my final straw. The condition has been exacerbated by the cold, and my recent experiences with external and internal isolation. You see, a week ago, my girlfriend broke up with me. However it doesn’t hurt like the bleeding scabs on my scalp or the coronavirus infected joints that I contracted from an audience member. It blends from the shadows of warped memories into something more than a sore throat from a hallowing scream, or the uncomfortable mental imprint of murder on screen. If I was ever a proponent of Halloween, then this week I would have been its biggest fan. I had never felt more alone or desperate before. For days after she told me, something ugly grew in the psychological closet I used to clean. A mesh of insecurity, madness and desolation.

It was nine minutes past four on the twenty second of October when she broke up with me. About fifteen to twenty minutes beforehand, I was in the shower having my usual maladaptive daydreaming experience, which I often viewed as either one of my windows into the spiritual world, a way of taking note of my subconscious fears or an opportunity to create story ideas. During this particular immersive experience, I was ‘talking’ to my father and I argued in response to his homophobic remarks, that “if God didn’t want me to date Ashley Matthews, then he would send me a sign!”. Boy, did God respond fast. Almost as if this whole time that I was blaspheming him and cheating on him with astrology so that I could connect with my now ex girlfriend’s secular perspective while explaining why I felt so deeply spiritually connected to her, he was in the writer’s room, devising the most entertaining plotline possible. Like, yes, seventeen hours earlier, we will have Zuki post on her tiktok the trend where a specific audio/filter combination predicts who the love of your life was. That audio will come from her favourite show starring an interracial lesbian couple. Of course, naively still fully in love with the girl who will break her heart two hours after she wakes up, Zuki will cut the audio short as it does not apply. Yet. Hmm, God must have thought to himself, this is not spicy enough. Ashley (fake name of course) will break up with Zuki, a day after Taylor Swift releases her latest album filled with break up songs. To make things even spicier, Zuki will visit her girlfriend’s family two days before that said girlfriend breaks up with her. The exact same family and now ex, Zuki will have to see during thanksgiving because the tickets to the gay capital of California (San Francisco) just had to be so expensive. (If that’s not Rainbow Capitalism, I do not know what is). Then to seal the comedy and drama of it all, after four days of not cleaning her room, so she thinks she is developing an allergic reaction to the dustmites, she will test positive for covid. Four days, which had spent wailing to everyone she knew online and in person. Honestly, if God took over the writing at Riverdale, he would win an emmy. All jokes aside, it’s not God’s fault that Ashley is great at horrific timing, nor is it his fault that I once wrote down after maladaptive dreaming and too many Lana Del rey songs, fully aware of the law of attraction and the book of Habakkuk, chapter 2, verses 2 to 3 in the bible, that if I have to go to pain, hurt or trauma, that I only want it to artistic and well written. The truth is, I was right. The concept of the creative genius that would have been on display if my pain was fictionally constructed, enthralls me. I was going to be sad either way, it might as well be aesthetic.

It was ugly for some time though. At times, it felt that I had lost every other grasp on life when I lost her. The school work was piling, my unmedicated, sickly body was flaky, smelly and coughing, and I was either oversleeping or not sleeping at all, filling pages of my diary with shaky ink. I assumed that this was just another excuse to not live up to my potential, but then it started to become clear that I was indeed, despite all protests and desire to toughen up, descending towards a certain level of darkness. The days were fluctuating between getting better and worse, the good only further fooling me into believing that what had happened was a non-event in comparison to my waning self confidence and theoretical will power. Is this what US candidates will feel if their state changes color this midterm. Would Maura Healey feel (emotionally) like her organs have been gutted out from her like me and like a metaphorical version of Casey Becker from *Scream*(1996)? In all three scenarios, none of us would have chosen our fate and I pray that at least Healey (who I can not even vote for as an immigrant so I actually do not know her, just know that she is a blue) gets her happy ending.

I decided to take my flowers with me to the covid isolation room on campus. I figured if I had to move and be alone, I wanted my theater gifted flowers to die alongside my self esteem. Of course, God had to pull one more joke by having me isolated during Halloween weekend, the one weekend where I wash my sorrows away with music and temporary attraction. The truth is, I had been feeling emotionally conflicted over whether or not I wanted to celebrate it so I could see the blessing in disguise from this. That being said, the timing heightened my loneliness. I resorted to watching ten films, ranging from horror to gay people breaking up, which was becoming a monotonous emotional experience despite the implied diversity. In the end, it was just two ways of having lost people. When Ashley broke up with me, I had lost my best friend.

In many ways, I was grateful though, for the freedom to be sad and on my own. It was like I was in a temporary mental hospital, with phone calls and zoom recordings with people who cared about me. My food was being delivered so I could eat alone in peace and I had so little with me that it was easy to clean and even possible to exercise in my own room because the floor wasn’t dirty. I was even catching up with my political economy class work. Things were looking up.

Then Monday hits, and I’m still coughing and I had missed all the work from my other classes because I overslept, procrastinated and miscalculated. I then got an email from my political economy teacher that the articles I was using for my work were considered out of date. My stomach dropped and it’s already one o’ clock when I woke up and time for the school counselor session and then my remote job. But he is fundamentally right. I’ve been out of touch with what’s going on in the outside world because my personal world has been imploding. I wish I could link my online activity over the past week with continued activism to help Iran, but my latest podcast episode talks about generational experiences with being socially disconnected amongst peers and how the teen horror genre reflects each generation’s social fears, with gen z being afraid of being viewed as insensitive and selfish, identity and politically wise, while being more self absorbed and inauthentic than ever before. My fear does not relate, not anymore, to what is happening to the world, but it does not make it less consuming.

By the time I left isolation, the trees too, had lost their color. I moved back into my dirty room and did a third of my laundry on Tuesday night. I overslept on Wednesday morning, attended a lecture in the art gallery about archival work that mentioned South Africa and struggled to finish my work the rest of the day. Despite the struggle, hearing and talking about my home thousands of miles away soothed me. I realized upon reflection, that I had spent my first two months at college trying to build a home for myself in my girlfriend’s chest. It was not just the loss of being loved and validated. Nor is it just the fear of losing a new family. It was the loss of a new home that I had spent seven months building, remotely at first. In a psychological sense, I was homeless without her and her breakup had felt more akin to an eviction. I stop working when I realize that I will make no progress that night and

finished my first tv show in over a week where the gay couple work out their problems in the end. That night, I dreamt of healing myself.

Thursday was different though. Perhaps it was the promise of pumpkin pie from my friends in the cooking club or the guest speaker promised for film class. Perhaps I actually just decided to listen to my advisor for once and take it easy on myself. I woke up. I got dressed without showering because of the fear that I would be late. I listened to the guest speaker talk and felt my insides grow alive with the same passion for storytelling I have always felt. I rushed to lunch. I rushed to take a shower. I rushed to my meeting with the Director of Anti-racism on campus to discuss ways of improving and reshaping campus. I felt my brain tickle with solutions. I was starting to feel alive again in a good way. My racial capitalism professor let my awesome TA for the class lead a chill “ask and study space” where I caught up with some of the readings and booked a second session. I ate pumpkin pie for the first time. I then attended a talk by a black female cartoonist’s talk on her experiences drawing comics from her time at Hampshire college until now. She was hilarious and I related so deeply to her experiences as a black queer woman and a storyteller. I felt revived. I finished my delicious avocado vegan taco, got gloves and an email notification that my scalp medication will arrive the following day, and went down to the kern center for an open mic night with free hot drinks and treats.

The truth is with her I lost my poetry. I could never pinpoint why, I had just assumed that she wasn’t someone who was into poetry or romantic fluff like me. Tonight I understood why. I wrote a poem about my pain and then reached into my own archive of past poetry as well, before performing unplanned, in front of a live audience. I said my break up poem second last and by then I was gaining my momentum. My teeth were seething and I felt like my airways had been unclogged as spit gathered in my mouth. I thought after the performance, ‘thank you for returning my poetry that you, Ashley, stole,’ and then adding the line to the poem in private. I spoke my last poem, one of my favorite poems, entitled “A Zulu Lesbian” and I basked in the fairylights as I spoke words I hadn’t had the space to say for long time. The language zipped through my lips. I felt at peace. I felt at home. 🐻

# The Shart of Being Normal: an unprofessional book review

by Isabelle Casavant

\*The discussions in this book review are overdramatized, and it is not my intention to offend any of my readers. If you happen to enjoy the book that I am about to discuss, by god, please take it off my hands; I will happily lend it to you to borrow forever. Also, this story will include spoilers about The Art of Being Normal by Lisa Williamson!!

As a queer author, I have read many LGBTQ+ stories in my time, and though most of the books that adorn my bookshelf are delightful and worth reading again, there’s this one hell-spawn of a book that I shall warn you against reading (unless you desire to test your tolerance, in which case I own the book and am happy to let you borrow it or even keep it if you so wish). This story is centered around two transgender teens, and before I delve into this, I want to disclose that I am not trans myself, though I hope that my opinion will resonate with the trans individuals reading this and warn against the absolute acid-trip that this story is.

I have decided to delve into some research about the author to support this rather aggressive book review. Lisa Williamson is a cisgender author who was born in Nottingham in 1980. Between 2010 and 2012, she worked as an administrator at the Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS). She states that this is a clinic for under-eighteens who are struggling with their gender identity. The young individuals whom she worked with inspired her to write her story that I am discussing now. Though I speak harshly of it, I must cut her some slack. Her story inspires me to write pages of both organized and unorganized ranting, so to some extent, she is inspiring me to write.

I read this story a little while ago, though I always find myself passionate about ranting about it, for it is so unbelievably unrealistic and aggravating that it’s somehow entertaining. Though the representation is poor, I will admit that I read this story in one day. It was rather entertaining; I was on the edge of my seat wondering how the hell the author was gonna wrap this abysmal and smoldering story up in a bow.

I received a Barnes & Noble gift card from a great friend of mine and used it to treat myself to a few LGBTQ+ books. I was close to checking out (and I should have, cause I had enough books to last me a lifetime), but then I saw it.

The Shart of Being Normal.

I should have simply turned on my heel and left right then and there, but I bought the sucker. I have a few transgender OCs, and it is of great importance that I authentically represent them. I wanted to use Williamson’s book as a way of understanding the trans community.

PLEASE DON’T MAKE THIS MISTAKE!! Ask your trans friends for advice on this, not cisgender authors.

First off, the book’s synopsis was simply a catfish in and of itself. It stated: “On the first day at his new school, Leo Denton has one goal; to be invisible. Attracting the attention of the most beautiful girl in his class is definitely not part of that plan--especially because Leo is a trans guy and isn’t out at his new school.

“Then Leo stands up for a classmate in a fight and they become friends. With Leo’s help and support, the classmate, who is a trans girl, prepares to come out and transition--and to find a new name, Kate. Though Kate and Leo are surrounded by bigots, they have each other, and they have hope in their future.”

I thought it sounded like a heartwarming story. A trans guy helping a closeted trans girl come out to her friends and family.

That simply wasn’t the case.

Biggest red flag: Kate is referred to by her deadname throughout the *entire* story up until the last chapter. I was not expecting this since Kate is referred to by she/her pronouns and her actual name in the book’s synopsis. This story is written in first person with the perspective shifting between Kate and Leo every chapter. As a trans person himself, you’d think that Leo would see the importance of referring to his friend by her actual name and pronouns, but he simply fails in that department. I believe it was the author’s intention to write Leo as the “bad-boy” character, and though he does warm up towards the end, he’s honestly an unlikeable person throughout.

Reading the back of this book, I assumed that Leo would be actively supporting Kate with her coming-out process, but instead, he ends up taking her on a trip to find his biological father. None of this was specified on the back of the book, so my confusion was to be expected, especially since Leo did not actively invite Kate to go on this journey with him. She had to plead her interest and concern for Leo going alone in order for Mr. Curmudgeon to allow her to join him.

Kate deserved more than what she received throughout this entire book. She brought a dress and wig with her for the journey to truly immerse herself in feminine presentation for the first time. She strutted like an absolute queen down the aisle of the train the two teens were taking, but Leo simply sulked, because he doesn’t understand what it means to be happy.

The two teens end up getting drunk (very legal, indeed) and only then does Leo refer to Kate by her name, resulting in much excitement on Kate’s end. She expresses delight in Leo referring to her by her name. That quickly comes to an end by the next morning when the two of them wake up hungover, Leo turns over in the bed, and promptly refers to Kate by her deadname.

It should also be noted that Kate and Leo do not become friends until halfway through the book, and when Kate confides to Leo that she believes herself to be transgender, Leo proceeds to show her that he is also trans. Maybe Williamson was going for a more “dramatic” route, but instead of just verbally stating that he was transgender as well, Leo proceeds to show Kate that he chest binds. This is immediately followed up with Kate exclaiming “you’re a girl?!” HELP WHAT??

I also wish to discuss the other characters within this story, which are somehow just as (if not more) aggravating than the ones I’ve already discussed. Kate is the most tame of the bunch, I will admit. The side characters of this story are crafted to bring the main characters misery. Being transphobic is simply their only personality trait. However, is that too different from actual transphobes?

When the whole high school discovers that Leo is trans (can not recall for the life of me how that occurred), absolutely everyone loses their shit simultaneously and is revealed to be transphobic. Even Kate’s younger sister, who I doubt even understands the concept of gender (do any of us, is the question?) is revealed to be transphobic when she comments on the fact that “Leo was living a lie and is actually a woman”. Kate’s two friends are the only non-judgemental characters that simply don’t care that Kate is trans. Give them a cookie.

I understand Kate being dead named within the story from time to time because she comes out during the course of the book. Why she needs to be dead named quite so frequently (even after she comes out) is beyond my understanding and would likely take every ounce of my brainpower to even begin comprehending. However, Leo being dead named as often as he is in this book is far from necessary.

During my queer romance literature phase (please give me book recommendations, I beg of thee) I read a story called May The Best Man Win by Z. R. Ellor. The representation is actually appealing, likely because it was written by a trans author. Every time the main character, a trans male, is dead

named, the dialogue promptly cuts off, and readers get to see his reaction. This distills more emotion in the reader than throwing around a character’s dead name incessantly for the purpose of showcasing just how endangered he is.

The stakes are raised for Leo when reader’s discover his biggest secret. Leo left his last school due to a traumatic instance of bullying. Everyone assumed he was expelled because of something he did, though that is far from the truth. Williamson went to great lengths to describe this traumatic event. **Content warning:** I don’t plan on going into detail, but the next sentence does describe physical harassment and transphobia!!

Leo was tied to a tree in the woods, stripped of his clothes with a knife, and slurs were thrown at him from every which way. Though I’m a fan of dramatization as a writer, something feels rather strange about a cisgender author describing since an event in detail. Others may not be bothered by this. Feel what you want to feel, but I’ve spoken my truth.

Moving on to the next character! Mentioned vaguely in the back of the book is Alicia, Leo’s girlfriend of two-odd weeks or something. Straight from Pandora’s Box, Alicia has no idea of Leo’s trans identity. When things begin to grow spicy between the two of them (in a closet, I think? Interesting place to experiment, but that actually isn’t the most questionable part of this story), Leo begins to grow anxious, for he’s aware that he needs to tell his girlfriend about his trans identity.

When Leo reveals his truth, Alicia gets unnecessarily upset and breaks things off with him, proclaiming that he broke her heart. This is far from the truth, as Leo was being incredibly vulnerable with his romantic partner.

Aside from another scene where Alicia is seen berating Leo for simply existing, Alicia does not appear again until the end of the book. That much is annoying, but the most irritating aspect of this is the two ex’s interaction. Contrary to popular belief (aka. My assumptions for this story), the last scene of this book does not involve Kate and Leo discussing their trans journeys and relishing in the friendship they now have (as the back of the book may suggest). Instead, Alicia pops up at Leo’s door to apologize, asking if they can be friends again.

Instead of spitting at her feet or kicking her to the curb (the ending that nobody asked for, but was so desperately needed), Leo admits that he missed her and would like to start over again as friends. The two proceed to shake hands, introducing themselves as if they are just meeting for the first time. As if they weren’t cheek to cheek in a closet prepared to engage in horizontal refreshment earlier in the book.

Woo hoo! That’s where the story ends!! Really wrapped that up with a bang!

With this book review, I’ve either distilled in you a great distaste or a great curiosity for this book. As I prefaced before, I have the book if you wish to take it off my hands. I’m sure you can find me. We can meet in a back alley. I’ll open my trench coat to reveal it.

You’ll have a queer book to add to your collection. How wonderful. It’s like selling drugs, but instead of being sold the cocaine you were promised, you find yourself with a small plastic bag of baking powder instead. What a shame. 🐑



# vocal necromancy

by Jess Lin Jiménez

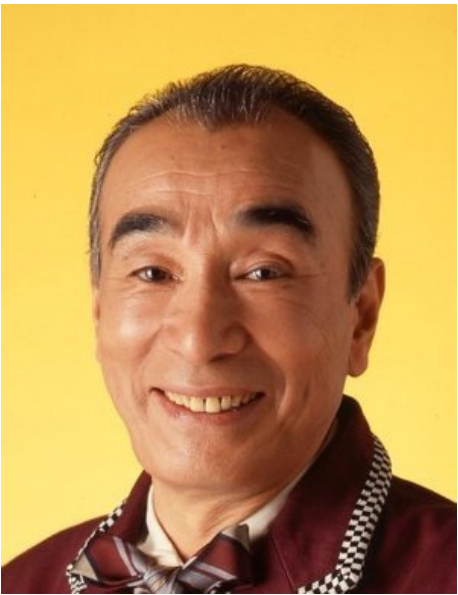
Previously I explained a tiny bit about the basic functions of vocal synthesizers like VOCALOID. They use data from recorded audio to make it sound like someone is really talking or singing. When VOCALOID was still pretty new, there was a lot of talk about what this could mean for well known singers that had already passed (think Elvis or Selena). Discussion about this aspect of VOCALOID’s potential dwindled as people became more interested in the scene that was already flourishing. The reality of what had come to be (anime girls and young adult angst) was quite different from the original professional-centered vision of VOCALOID, and so it follows that the conversation drifted more and more away from topics that were so prevailing before.

Anyway, the year is 2011. It’s been about 11 years since the VOCALOID project officially began and 7 years after its initial public release. The VOCALOID engine is already on its third version and Hatsune Miku as a product is four years old. So now, finally, there is news of a project to restore and manipulate the voice of someone who has passed away.

## Ueki-loid - using a living sacrifice

Hitoshi Ueki was a Japanese musician, comedian, and actor who passed away in 2007. His family commissioned YAMAHA to create a synthesized vocal bank to commemorate him. While the project actually began in the year of his passing, news did not break until 2011 when it had been completed. To create the synth, a voicebank was created using not the voice of Ueki himself, but of his still-alive oldest son, Kouichi Hiro. Using this vocal data, a bunch of math and stuff happened, and the difference between Ueki’s and Hiro’s voices were made up.

The finished product was released privately. It has never been made available for public use or access and probably never will. There are remnants of the finished bank’s demos online that are available to the public though. If you listen to them, you will see that because of the unique process of the bank’s development, there is a lot of “engine noise”. Basically, it sounds pretty artificial and you can hear that most of the sound is actually the vocal synthesis engine trying to do its thing with the limited and wonky data it has.

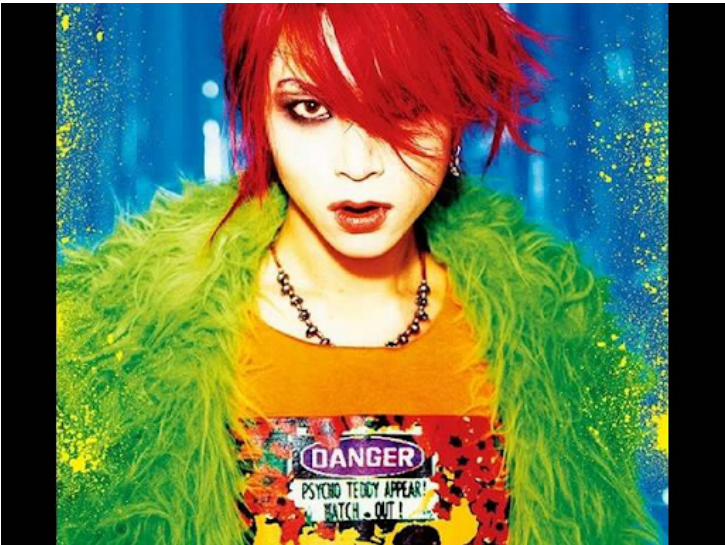


## hide - successful necromancy w/ the power of friendship

This is actually all I wanted to talk about. I am sooo taken with the sound of hide’s vocaloid, which like Ueki-loid was created for the third iteration of the VOCALOID engine (VOCALOID V3). Hideto Matsumoto, “hide”, was a singer and first lead guitarist for the very famous rock band, X Japan. (If you like visual kei even a little bit, you’ve probably heard about this band!! Considered very very influential.) In 1998, hide passed away shortly before he was meant to record his song, Co Gal, for his first solo album called “Ja, Zoo”. Hide left behind the demo and lyrics of the track and for his 50th birthday in 2014, a hide vocaloid version of the song was released and so was the completed album.

The hide vocaloid, which is simply referred to as “hide” like the original singer (we as the public don’t know if the bank has its own name), was not created like Ueki-loid. Voice samples were extracted from recordings of hide from when he was still alive. A close friend and fellow musician, INA, worked closely on the production of both the bank and music.

I wanted to talk about hide’s vocaloid because I love it so, so much. It is such a unique voice not just in the world but also, more personally to me, in vocal synths in general. On that note, vocal synths based on visual kei artists tend to be (see: best and most cheated vocaloid ever created, Gakupo). I cannot express my love for the vocaloid version of Co Gal. Both it and the demo version are available on YouTube and I encourage everyone to listen. I do prefer the vocaloid version. I know it may be considered an unfair comparison or even a biased one, but yeah. I cannot think of how else to type out my excitement. I will say though that hide’s vocaloid sounds incredible even by today’s standards (not just VOCALOID’s), which is saying something. For a lot of the song, I think the average person wouldn’t notice anything!! Maybe some of the more synthetic-sounding parts could be passed off as stylistic choice? Some people have even mixed up the demo and vocaloid versions.



Just like Ueki-loid, hide’s vocaloid was never and will probably never be released for public use. These two vocal synths are so far the only official members of the “Legend of Vocaloid” - a lineup singers that have passed away and had their voices restored by vocaloid. Uh... it’s 2023 now and VOCALOID in general has been pretty neglected by YAMAHA so I wouldn’t hold my breath waiting for the next bit of news. Thank you for reading! Please listen to Co Gal : ) 🐱



The Re-Remaking of a College, Chapter 1:  
Taking the “Extra” Out of “Extracurriculars”  
*or, Why We Need Academic Credit for Our Student Group Involvement*

by Jay Poggi

I came to Hampshire because I wanted to study game design at the weirdest school I could find. I have certainly done that throughout my three semesters here (in spite of the near-total absence of game design faculty), and yet, whenever the thought of my impending Div III sends me hurtling into backward-looking reflection, I see that nothing has defined my time at Hampshire as much as The Omen. How did that happen? A game design student committing so hefty a chunk of their soul to the world’s most [redacted] campus publication shouldn’t make sense, and yet I’ve stuck with it, I’ve insisted on making co-editing and co-running The Omen one of my top priorities even when the weight of academic responsibility has threatened to squash me into dude-jelly, because I’ve never stopped finding the work immensely fulfilling—socially, creatively, and educationally.

Today, I want to discuss the fulfillment that comes from getting invested in student groups. I want to demonstrate how essential so-called “extracurriculars” are to our education, how we can take on significant responsibilities in student groups without jeopardizing our health and academics, and how we need Hampshire’s support in doing so. I hope this piece can provide advice for struggling students, feedback for the administration, and a healthy dose of progressive education propaganda for everyone else.

I’ve learned a whole lot from my student groups that I wouldn’t have been able to learn from a traditional class. I’ve gained skills that will prove vital to my future work: Making Myths Living Legends taught me how to collaborate with others on creative projects, Hampshire Creative Community taught me how to give and receive thoughtful artistic critique, and The Shire taught me how to improve my games by incorporating player feedback. Two years of running The Omen has taught me how to manage finances, navigate bureaucracy, plan events, and endure Adobe InDesign. Most meaningful of all, however, is how participating in these groups has helped me grow socially and emotionally. I’ve become so much more comfortable talking to new people, I imagine fifteen-year-old me would scarcely recognize twenty-two-year-old me. I’ve learned forgiveness, patience, and the steadiness of self necessary to overcome conflict. I’ve let go of the pursuit of perfection to the point that, as I write this sentence, I know I will finish this essay.

I had a feeling I wasn’t alone in having my education so profoundly uplifted by my student groups, so I sent a survey to students and alums asking them about their experiences with student groups. Thank you to everyone who responded, and thank you doubly to those who permitted me to quote them in this piece. Here are some examples of how current students answered when I asked what they’ve learned from student groups:

“How to be in company with people from different walks of life, and from different places. How to work together on common ideas and interests.”

“working with people i like makes working a lot easier. also, sometimes conflict happens and you just have to be able to bear through it in as mature and kind a way as possible.”

“I’ve been able to practice my writing through clubs like Hampshire Creative Commons and The Omen, I’ve learned several recipes through Cooking Club, and I’ve gained more productive and

healthy language to talk about sexuality through Sexperts. I’ve also gotten a ton of experience as a student group signer through managing funds, running social events, club recruiting, and meeting with staff to discuss club matters.”

And here are some alum responses:

“I learned to manage my time. I learned to effectively communicate with lots of different people. I’ve also learned to plan events and work autonomously, which I don’t think I could ever learn in a classroom.”

“I learned about project management, how to convince a bureaucratic body that my ideas and the ideas of the members of the groups I ran were worthwhile, how to budget, and how to plan for a variety of time-scales.”

“I was too afraid to speak up in class cause of social anxiety my first year, but being in dialogue with the Omen Staff made me more comfortable with speaking up during seminars. Also helped me understand the inner workings of the college.”

Investing in student groups has the potential to elevate our academic learning and social and emotional growth, but reaching this potential comes at a cost: time and energy, two resources that students are perpetually short on.

My fellow Omen signers and I spend at least six hours a week on Omen-related work, whether corresponding with staff and students, organizing and running events, or editing issues like the one you now hold in your hands (or behold on a screen). When preparing for special issues or advertising to potential new members, that number shoots up drastically. That’s an entire class’s worth of work that we’re doing on top of being full-time students. We’re happy to do it—in fact, we can’t imagine not doing it—but running The Omen, taking three to four courses, and maintaining our mental and physical health all at the same time is impossible. Eventually, one of those things starts to give.

We Omenites aren’t the only ones struggling, not even close. I know from personal experience that the signers and dungeon masters of MMLL have it even worse than we do during Deathfest season, and I get the impression that just about everyone involved in theater at Hampshire is stretched near the point of breaking.<sup>1</sup> Many who answered my survey said they struggled to balance academics, student group aspirations, and physical/mental health most of the time. When asked what they would need in order to achieve a healthier balance, several mentioned time:

“More hours in a day”

“More time. There are so many fast-moving parts, such as writing for scholarships/grants, preparing to study abroad, attending classes, and trying to make all the LCs, since I love them all. I know I never have anything scheduled during meal times, so end up at events/groups that happen at those times rather than going home to make dinner or lunch”

“1) more energy 2) more time 3) less work”

“The ability to be able to step back once in a while. Although Hampshire advertises itself as a

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah of theater board has confirmed this statement is true

place that concerns itself with the mental well-being of its students, it is quite difficult to set limits here. There’s so much responsibility but little support systems to catch you when you fall, at least academically.”

Curiously, even those who didn’t name it explicitly still implied that a lack of time was their main source of stress:

“the main things would better public transportation, and in some cases lighter workloads on class assignments.”

“Maybe a few more check-ins from admin staff other than signer training in the beginning of the year. Staff were always responsive to me when I had a problem or a specific question, but it would have been nice to have an chance for optional workshops/training from staff members on signer-related topics at some intervals throughout the year.”

“If I had developed delegation skills earlier, it would have been easier to balance my various responsibilities.”

“AUAHGJHFAHDSJFHSDJ”

Wishes for more reliable public transit, more staff support, and the ability to delegate responsibilities are ultimately wishes for more time. So what feat of chronomancy must Hampshire perform to give its students what they need?

The simplest and most immediately effective solution would be to let students earn academic course credit from their student group activities. That way, curriculums and extracurriculums won’t compete for students’ time, as they will be one and the same. Luckily, Hampshire already offers several types of academic activities that students can use to gain course credit outside of traditional classes: independent studies, special projects, and EPECs (experimental programs in education and community). Here’s a quick rundown of each of these activities:

An **independent study** is a student-designed project supervised by a faculty member that is considered “equivalent to a semester-long course”<sup>2</sup> (in other words, it takes place during the semester, grants four academic credits, and counts toward being considered a full-time student). Independent studies can be literally anything, as long as the student spends “the equivalent of approximately 180 hours engaged in academic work”,<sup>2</sup> and their faculty supervisor and advisor sign off on it. Contrary to what the name suggests, **students can do independent studies in groups**, as long as each student fills out their own form, gets approved, and puts in the required number of hours.

A **special project** is a lot like an independent study, in that it’s a self-designed, 180-hour academic activity that counts for four credits. It differs in that it can take place at any time during the year, on campus or off campus, and it is supervised by someone *other* than a Hampshire faculty member or student. The supervisor could be the student’s boss at an internship, a mentor leading community work, a Hampshire staff person, or anyone the student’s advisor considers to be “a qualified supervisor”.<sup>3</sup> Despite being equivalent to a class or independent study in hours and credits, **special**

<sup>2</sup> From the independent study form: [https://hampshire.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_cRR8nz4a745cIC2](https://hampshire.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cRR8nz4a745cIC2)

<sup>3</sup> From the special project form: <https://www.hampshire.edu/sites/default/files/centralrecords/SPECIAL%20PROJECTS%20APPROVAL%20FORM.pdf>

**projects do not count toward being considered a full-time student.**

An **EPEC** is... well, I’m not really sure. I’ve heard from alums and lore-wise students that EPECs are a way for students to teach their own classes. My own research has led me to an “EPEC FAQs” Google Slides presentation<sup>4</sup> and a seemingly abandoned “Hampshire College Epec” Facebook page,<sup>5</sup> both from 2020. Both of these make clear that an EPEC can be quite a lot more than just a student-taught class, but since the link to the actual application form leads to a long-deceased HampEngage page reading, “The resource you are looking for has been removed, had its name changed, or is temporarily unavailable”<sup>6</sup>, I can’t figure out the particulars of how these projects work, or if they can grant any credits besides CEL. I’ll be exploring the ethereal EPEC more in my next essay.

In theory, there’s nothing stopping a student from using any of these activities to turn their student group work into academic work; in fact, the reason I’m able to write this essay in the first place is because I’m doing just that. As I mentioned in the editorial, this essay is part of an independent study I’m doing with the inimitable Ethan Ludwin-Peery. Since my Omen work this semester counts as one of my classes, I’ve been able to not only meet my Omen responsibilities, but surpass them, pursuing a project I never would have been able to otherwise, and all without putting my health or academic performance at risk. This merging of curricular and extracurricular should be the norm, and I think it would be if not for a few issues.

First, few students know about these options. While many students are aware of independent studies, I know of only one case where a group of students attempted one together, and I am the only person I know who has done an independent study related to student group work. I’ve only ever heard EPECs alluded to in faint, phasmophobic whispers, and I’m pretty sure Ida Kao (18F) is the only person left on Earth who remembers special projects. If Hampshire commits to spreading the word about these activities, so many more students will be able to engage in the sort of radical, self-directed learning that defines this school. Signer training and HampFest would be great places to start, as these events attract students who are most likely to get invested in student groups.

Second, finding faculty to supervise independent studies, especially those based on student group work, can be pretty tough. Take Hampshire’s game design and discussion group, The Shire, for example. It’s inevitable that someday a group of Shire members are going to want to make a game together. Say this group decides to make it an independent study; they look up the game design professors at Hampshire and find that there’s only one. Game design is one of Hampshire’s (and the Valley’s) most popular fields of study, and this single professor is in ludicrously high demand, serving on several Div II and III committees and already taking part in multiple independent studies. If this professor isn’t able to supervise these Shire members’ independent study, they may very well have no one else to turn to.

Ethan suggested one idea of how to address this faculty shortage. This semester, Hampshire’s offering a course called, “Supported Project Seminar.”<sup>7</sup> According to its description, “This course provides a supportive, structured, and collaborative environment for students to pursue projects of their own design, alone or as part of a project team.” It sounds like a way for a small number of professors (in this case, two) to supervise multiple student projects at once without having to schedule separate times to meet with each group. A similar course could be offered to support student group-related projects.

The last issue is that special projects are not counted when determining a student’s full-time status. Special projects could help to make up for the faculty shortage by providing a way for students

<sup>4</sup> [https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1DIPqYJY2dEgUsc4hfdcWiu\\_vnDjHorCr4QCP9q\\_3v50/edit#slide=id.p](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1DIPqYJY2dEgUsc4hfdcWiu_vnDjHorCr4QCP9q_3v50/edit#slide=id.p)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/HCEPEC/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://engage.hampshire.edu/submitter/form/start/370531>

<sup>7</sup> By the way, if you’re taking or teaching this class, I’d love to hear your thoughts on it! You can reach me at [jawp21@hampshire.edu](mailto:jawp21@hampshire.edu) or at Waker of Winds#6779 on Discord.



to earn academic credit for student group work under the supervision of Hampshire staff. In fact, for many groups, a staff member from Student Engagement or one of the Centers could be a much more natural fit for supervising a project than a faculty member. But in order to serve as a viable alternative to independent studies, special projects must count toward full-time status. Special projects require just as much work, grant just as many credits, and provide just as much educational value as a class or independent study, so I see no reason why they should not be considered equivalent in regard to a student’s status.

Better communication about alternative academic activities, a special class for student group projects modeled after Supported Project Seminar, and a rewrite to the special project rules to make them equal to a class—committing to these three simple changes will immeasurably improve not only students’ health, but the health of the community as a whole. Once students have the support to pursue varied and ambitious projects through their student groups, life at Hampshire will become even more vibrant.

I know I can’t be the only one lying awake at night asking myself what “school” really is, what it’s for, what it could be for. I’m sure there are a thousand ways that Hampshire could improve that I have yet to consider, but I imagine some of you have. I encourage you to share your ideas; with your friends, your professors, the administration, and the whole community here in The Omen.

I would like to end with a plea to my fellow students: if you spend more than a couple hours a week on student groups (or any extracurricular for that matter), I beg of you, consider making your activities into an independent study. Come up with a way to frame your involvement as a narrative with a starting point and an end goal. Find a professor who sees the value in what you’re doing. The add/drop period ends on 2/3, so there’s still time for you to do it this year if you act fast! I promise you, no matter how “non-academic” you think your extracurriculars are, you can make it work; and once you do, you might just start to feel that “freedom” that Hampshire promises. 🙋

# We Adopted 5 Children But 4 of Them Died, A Houseplant Does Not Make an Apartment Plant

by grieving plant parent (Kyla)

We went in with the right intentions,  
but not the right supplies.  
We’re a young lesbian couple after all,  
why wouldn’t we get houseplants?  
We both had our own experience with houseplants  
still, it wasn’t enough.

It began with 5 beautiful children that we adopted for a nice \$100.  
We named our swiss monstera Esmerelda,  
she had long vines covered in palm-sized green leaves that had the appearance of swiss cheese.  
We named our string of pearls Peridot,  
he was our baby made up of small green balls sprouting from the soil.  
We named our callisa Amethyst,  
she was a small pink thing with frill-like vines spilling from her pot.  
We named our silvia Garnet,

she had the appearance of two purple and green hands that opened and closed throughout the day.  
We named our t rex begonia Unakite,  
his leaves were large and textured like a snakeskin purse.

Once home, we arranged them in seven different ways  
trying our best to provide sufficient sunlight for them to be as happy as possible.  
A watering schedule was put in place for each plant,  
bottom watering in a tub of rainwater and sunbathing on Sundays was our secret recipe for success.  
We treated our babies like royalty  
respecting their boundaries, talking to them daily, and checking up on them throughout the day.

Despite tiptop care, our plants could not survive  
in our small apartment bedroom.  
The small east-placed window did not provide  
enough sunlight for our children to nourish themselves.  
Four of our children withered away  
right in front of our eyes.

Esmerelda ended up being the strongest of our children, thriving still to this day.  
Our Unakite was first to go,  
his large leaves grew dry and flaked away while his pink stems sunk down to the earth.  
Our Amethyst was second to go,  
her frilly pink vines turned brown and fell off across our room.  
Our Peridot was third to go,  
his green orbs were yanked out by the house tabby cat and he never recovered.  
Our Garnet was the fourth to go,  
her lower leaves grew dry and sucked all the life out of the upper leaves.

For weeks I refused to accept  
the death of my plant children.  
I was in complete denial  
watering a pot of dead leaves and soil begging for sprouts to show again.  
Reflecting on my losses has brought me to reality,  
allowing me to accept that we adopted five children and four of them died.  
I now know a houseplant does not make an apartment plant. 🙋

# Do Dogs Go to Heaven

by Malfoy Kimmel

It's as if the world has turned on its axis  
but only a few inches.

I can walk straight but my brow furrows  
in confusion grown from the pit of my stomach.

Of course I have questions about death  
how it feels, how it chooses, how it starts

how differently it will treat my brother  
from a leaf snapped off and tumbled

from a wagging, loping pet  
or a bird whose soul

surely is not any bigger than its frail,  
perching body. Loss (I wish)

means something is not really gone at all.  
Only traversed to another plane.

So I'd like to believe. With every moving thing  
that suddenly stills, from above me

from less than a hundred miles away,  
I feel it coming closer.

I'd like to believe-- and I do believe  
there is something after.

Something beautiful in the eyes of both  
holy and damned; like veins

or chemical nets cast in earth  
the minds will circle and sparkle in the light

of a universe's cold smile.  
This lovely vision I would like to hold onto

as the lights in a home wink out  
as a tiny bed lays empty.🐶

# a needlessly complicated story about developing musical taste (part 2)

by willow watson

for the first time since deciding to care about music, i had found a limit to the unfathomable opportunity in front of me. my inability to shuffle my playlist forced me to decide what i was listening to in a much narrower sense than i had before, & my main focus shifted from random discovery to understanding what i wanted to hear. i started going back through everything i'd collected, ranking songs in order & categorizing them by genre or artist or how much i liked them, trying to do justice to all that i'd found (& accidentally shaping my taste in the process). i ended up painstakingly ranking my first hundred favorite songs, the resulting playlist being more valuable as a snapshot of that time period than for its cohesiveness or listenability. even the first three entries (99 luftballons, whisper to a scream, & the tennessee waltz) didn't fall under any single musical scene, & unsurprisingly i found one hundred songs to be insufficient for summarizing my taste even at that point. i soon recognized that youtube wasn't meeting my needs & turned to the only free place i could think to properly organize my music - spotify.

instantly it became clear what i had been missing. spotify wasn't perfect, with its repetitive ads & its reputation among artists, but it gave me room to breathe & explore. it had an impressive ability to connect the dots of my varied interests & to work me into areas i'd never cared about before, & the effects on my musical taste were obvious. my familiarity with bands like peter, paul & mary grew into near obsession under the influence of its algorithm, opening '60s folk up to me at the same time as i was discovering harry belafonte & bobby darin. somehow, they all fit together in their own little mixes each day, & as i collected more & more these artists & songs came together to form a patchwork that finally seemed to reflect my taste. everything felt like it fit in a way that made sense, & so after only a few months on spotify i thought that i had reached what i had set out for in the first place: an understanding of my feelings about music in general. that time was commemorated in the five cds i created for the road trip to my first college visit, & the areas represented there (new wave, folk rock, oldies, beatles, soundtracks) seemed to be the end result of all of the work i had put in.

then, unexpectedly, a minor curiosity about the title theme of twin peaks sent me headfirst into dream pop, dream pop brought me to broadcast, & broadcast changed everything. articles i read about them used words like "retro" & "kitsch," but to me it was a completely new sound, & one i couldn't get enough of. here was something to bring together the disparate patchwork of my taste - clearly influenced by a '60s sound, but with a darkness & stylization that was riveting & completely unfamiliar. the solid clunkiness of their synthesizers played wonderfully off of the haunting vocals & graceful lyrics, & as a whole they entranced me & resonated with me as everything shut down for the first time over the pandemic. cut off from outside influence or social interaction, the lonely beauty of songs like "tears in the typing pool" captured my imagination & shifted my course to another direction entirely. there was something ethereally great about this band that i couldn't share with anyone else, so i started taking walks & just listening, taking in what made it so special. broadcast proved that i had been wrong, that i had missed something for all those months of discovery, & as silly & melodramatic as it sounds, it forced me to reconsider how i saw myself too. their music literally felt like a part i'd been missing, & i longed to lose myself in it as the quarantine dragged on & slowly tapered off.

it was in this atmosphere that i took a trip to florida over a year after the beginning of the pandemic.

to be continued...🐶



# Replication and Revolution in Psychology Reading List

by Ethan Ludwin-Peery 09F

*Editor’s note: check the inside cover for a link to the online archives, where you can find a version of this submission with clickable links!*

This is the list of assigned and optional readings for one of the classes I taught last semester, CS-0252 Replication and Revolution in Psychology. I hereby submit this reading list to The Omen and to the public domain, so that anyone who wasn’t able to be a part of my class can go over the material for themselves if they are interested.

## Wednesday, 7 September

Overview

### Readings Due:

Andrew Gelman – [What has happened down here is the winds have changed](#)

The Nib – [Repeat After Me](#) (comic)

Richard Feynman – [Cargo Cult Science](#)

### Optional Readings:

Andrew Gelman – [Why is the scientific replication crisis centered on psychology?](#)

## Monday, 12 September

Fabrication

### Readings Due:

*The Nation* – [Disgrace: On Marc Hauser](#)

Chapters 1 and 6 of *Faking Science* by Diederik Stapel, translated by Nick Brown. Warning, Stapel swears a lot and he is not a nice man.

### Optional Readings:

*Science* – [Harvard Misconduct Investigation of Psychologist Released](#)

Any other Stapel Chapters

## Wednesday, 14 September

Sociology and Incentives of Academic Science

### Readings Due:

Chapter 5 of *Faking Science* by Diederik Stapel, translated by Nick Brown. This chapter is pretty long and the first half isn’t super relevant to today’s topic, feel free to skim up to page 82, “I was pleased with my shovel and bucket in Chicago. Down in the basement...”

Erik Hoel – [Publish and Perish](#)

Étienne F.D. – [Book Review: Making Nature This SMBC comic](#)

### Optional Readings:

Tal Yarkoni – [No, it’s not The Incentives—it’s you](#)  
Chapter 4 of *Faking Science* by Diederik Stapel, translated by Nick Brown. In this chapter, Stapel talks a little more about the “under the table” elements (his words) of pre-replication-crisis psychology research. Informative if you want to read more about how things used to be.

## Monday, 19 September

p-Hacking and QRPs

### Readings Due:

Simmons, Nelson, & Simonsohn – [False-Positive Psychology](#)

538 – [Science Isn’t Broken](#)

Sacha Epskamp – [Questionable Practices by Researchers and Teenage Wizards](#)

### Optional Readings:

Data Colada – [Help! Someone Thinks I p-hacked](#)

## Wednesday, 21 September

p-Hacking responses

### Readings Due:

The Atlantic – [The Myth of Self-Correcting Science](#)  
Pashler & Harris – [Is the Replicability Crisis Overblown? Three Arguments Examined](#)

### Optional Readings:

Gelman & Loken – [The garden of forking paths](#)

Nature – [Psychologists do some soul-searching](#)

## Monday, 26 September

Power Posing

### Readings Due:

Watch: [The Original TED Talk](#)

Data Colada – [Power Posing: Reassessing The Evidence Behind The Most Popular TED Talk](#)

Dana Carney (the first author on the original power posing paper) – [My position on “Power Poses”](#)

### Optional Readings:

[The Original Power Posing Study](#)

[The Replication Attempt](#)

[NPR Coverage](#)

## Wednesday, 28 September

Power Posing Discussion & Scientific Criticism

### Readings Due:

The New York Times – [When the Revolution Came for Amy Cuddy](#)

Simine Vazire – [Criticizing a Scientist’s Work Isn’t Bullying. It’s Science.](#)

Data Colada – [Menschplaining: Three Ideas for Civil Criticism](#)

### Optional Readings:

[A new analysis from Cuddy et al. in 2017](#)

## Monday, 3 October

Statistical Power and p-Curve

### Readings Due:

Data Colada – [Samples Can’t Be Too Large](#)

Data Colada – [MTurk vs. The Lab: Either Way We Need Big Samples](#)

Simonsohn, Nelson, & Simmons – [p-Curve Paper](#)

### Optional Readings:

Data Colada – [We cannot afford to study effect size in the lab](#)

Data Colada – [“The” Effect Size Does Not Exist](#)  
Nature – [Power failure: why small sample size undermines the reliability of neuroscience](#)  
[www.p-curve.com](#)

## Wednesday, 5 October

YOM KIPPUR NO CLASS

## Monday, 10 October

OCTOBER BREAK NO CLASS

## Wednesday, 12 October

Social Priming

### Readings Due:

John Bargh – [Nothing in Their Heads](#)

Ed Yong – [A failed replication draws a scathing personal attack from a psychology professor](#)

Sanjay Srivastava – [Some reflections on the Bargh-Doyen elderly walking priming brouhaha](#)

### Optional Readings:

Bargh, Chen, & Burrows – [Automaticity of Social Behavior: Direct Effects of Trait Construct and Stereotype Activation on Action](#)

Doyen, Klein, Pichon, & Cleeremans – [Behavioral Priming: It’s All in the Mind, but Whose Mind?](#)

Daniel Kahneman – [A proposal to deal with questions about priming effects](#)

## Monday, 17 October

Feeling the Future

### Readings Due:

The New York Times – [Journal’s Article on ESP Is Expected to Prompt Outrage](#)

Ritchie, Wiseman, & French – [Failing the Future: Three Unsuccessful Attempts to Replicate Bem’s ‘Retroactive Facilitation of Recall’ Effect](#)

Andrew Gelman – [A new Bem theory](#)

### Optional Readings:

Data Colada – [Pilot-Dropping Backfires \(So Daryl Bem Probably Did Not Do It\)](#)

## Wednesday, 19 October

Preregistration

### Readings Due:

Data Colada – [Preregistration: Not just for the Empiro-zealots](#)

Data Colada – [How To Properly Preregister A Study](#)

### Optional Readings:

Data Colada – [AsPredicted: Pre-registration Made Easy](#)

## Monday, 24 October

Many Labs I

### Readings Due:

Klein et al. – [Investigating variation in replicability: A “many labs” replication project.](#)

Data Colada – [“Many Labs” Overestimated The Importance of Hidden Moderators](#)

**Optional Readings:**

Slate – [Why Psychologists’ Food Fight Matters Data from Investigating Variation in Replicability: A “Many Labs” Replication Project](#)

**Wednesday, 26 October**

On Failed Replications

**Readings Due:**

Jason Mitchell – [On the evidentiary emptiness of failed replications](#)

Tom Stafford – [What Jason Mitchell’s ‘On the emptiness of failed replications’ gets right](#)

**Optional Readings:**

**Monday, 31 October**

Growth Mindset

**Readings Due:**

BuzzFeedNews – [A Mindset “Revolution” Sweeping Britain’s Classrooms May Be Based On Shaky Science](#)

Scott Alexander – [Should Buzzfeed Publish Claims Which Are Explosive If True But Not Yet Proven?](#)

Alex Tabarrok – [Growth Mindset Replicates!](#)

**Optional Readings:**

[What did they say about it on twitter?](#)

**Wednesday, 2 November**

Reproducibility Project: Psychology

**Readings Due:**

Open Science Collaboration – [Estimating the reproducibility of psychological science](#)

Gilbert et al. – [Comment on “Estimating the reproducibility of psychological science”](#)

**Optional Readings:**

**Monday, 7 November**

Reproducibility Responses

**Readings Due:**

Anderson et al. – [Response to Comment on “Estimating the reproducibility of psychological science”](#)

Gilbert et al. – [A RESPONSE TO THE REPLY TO OUR TECHNICAL COMMENT ON “ESTIMATING THE REPRODUCIBILITY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE”](#)

Data Colada – [Evaluating Replications: 40% Full ≠ 60% Empty](#)

**Optional Readings:**

Sanjay Srivastava – [Evaluating a new critique of the Reproducibility Project](#)

Gilbert et al. – [More on “Estimating the Reproducibility of Psychological Science”](#)

**Wednesday, 9 November**

Facial Feedback Hypothesis

**Readings Due:**

Bayesian Spectacles – [Musings on Preregistration: The Case of the Facial Feedback Effect](#)

[Registered Replication Report: Strack, Martin, & Stepper \(1988\)](#)

**Optional Readings:**

**Monday, 14 November**

Ego Depletion

**Readings Due:**

Scott Alexander – [Book Review: Willpower](#)

Carter & McCullough – [Publication bias and the limited strength model of self-control: has the evidence for ego depletion been overestimated?](#)

Hagger et al. – [A Multilab Preregistered Replication of the Ego-Depletion Effect](#)

**Optional Readings:**

Simine Vazire – [fifty million frenchmen can eat it](#)

Carter, Kofler, Forster, & McCullough – [A series of meta-analytic tests of the depletion effect: Self-control does not seem to rely on a limited resource.](#)

Lurquin et al. – [No Evidence of the Ego-Depletion Effect across Task Characteristics and Individual Differences: A Pre-Registered Study](#)

**Wednesday, 16 November**

Many Labs II

**Readings Due:**

Klein et al. – [Many Labs 2: Investigating Variation in Replicability Across Samples and Settings After 10 Years, ‘Many Labs’ Comes to an End – But Its Success Is Replicable](#)

**Optional Readings:**

**Wednesday, 7 December**

Peer Review & Publication

**Readings Due:**

Michael Nielsen – [Three myths about scientific peer review](#)

Vox – [Meet Alexandra Elbakyan, the researcher who’s breaking the law to make science free for all](#)

Simine Vazire – [Opening the Black Box of Peer Review](#)

**Optional Readings:**

Vox – [Let’s stop pretending peer review works](#)

WIRED – [Peer-Reviewed Scientific Journals Don’t Really Do Their Job](#)

Smith (former editor of the British Medical Journal) – [Classical peer review: an empty gun Hate the peer-review process? Einstein did too](#) 🐼

**Monday, 21 November**

Brian Wansink

**Readings Due:**

Science – [Cornell nutrition scientist resigns after retractions and research misconduct finding](#)

Brian Wansink – [The Grad Student Who Never Said “No”](#) (Take a look at the comments on this blog post as well)

WIRED – [This Thanksgiving, Ditch the Food Psychology](#)

**Optional Readings:**

**Wednesday, 23 November**

THANKSGIVING NO CLASS

**Monday, 28 November**

Data Thugs

**Readings Due:**

Science – [Meet the ‘data thugs’ out to expose shoddy and questionable research](#)

Nature – [Meet this super-spotter of duplicated images in science papers](#)

**Optional Readings:**

James Heathers – [I Quit. And I’m OK With That](#)

Joe Hilgard – [Smell you later](#)

**Wednesday, 30 November**

Dan Ariely

**Readings Due:**

Data Colada – [Evidence of Fraud in an Influential Field Experiment About Dishonesty](#)

BuzzFeedNews – [Dan Ariely Retracts Honesty Study Based On Fake Data](#)

**Optional Readings:**

Science – [Fraudulent data raise questions about superstar honesty researcher](#)

Forbes – [An Influential Study Of Dishonesty Was Dishonest Original Paper](#)

**Monday, 5 December**

Generalizability and Paradigms

**Readings Due:**

Tal Yarkoni – [The Generalizability Crisis](#)

Thomas Kuhn – [What Are Scientific Revolutions?](#)

**Optional Readings:**



# SECTION LIES

## Fun Gender-Neutral Terms of Endearment

by Pierce Docherty & J. E. Cramer; foreword by J. E. Cramer

In the time since the publication of “Fun Gender-Neutral Things to Call Someone During Sex,” a lot of things have changed in my life. I’ve learned that the past-tense of “wheel” is not, in fact, “whelt.” I’ve lost my job, lost my horse, lost my truck, lost my wife, and lost my job again. I’ve had that recurring dream wherein I have to chew through the Gordian Knot so the ghost of my first-grade teacher does not drag me into the hereafter in disappointment at all that I’ve become four more times. I’ve fallen in love. Still, through it all, I never forgot what’s most important in this world—gender-neutral terms of endearment, 91 of which are included below.

Furthermore, I wish to stress that you *can* refer to a partner by any of the following names during sex if you’re having especially earnest sex, and you *can* call someone you love any of our Fun Gender-Neutral Things to Call Someone During Sex outside of an immediate sexual context if you are, as they say, freaky like that.

-J.C.

*With due counsel from the Sherwin-Williams paint color database as indicated thus (\*), the Dungeons & Dragons Fifth Edition list of spells (\*\*), The Jockey Club Registry (\*\*\*), Coasterpedia (\*\*\*\*), and Dr. Armando C. “Pitbull” Pérez (\*\*\*\*\*).*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| -Ace  | -Lake Ontario                               |
| -Bud  | -Central Mauve*                             |
| -Sport                                      | -Shillelagh**                               |
| -Champ                                      | -Flippo***                                  |
| -Pal  | -Steel Dragon 2000****                      |
| -10 liters of gasoline                      | -Hotel Room Service*****                    |
| -God’s favorite little airport customs desk | -Foxy the Pirate Fox                        |
| -TMNT Shellraiser****                       | -Liza Minnelli’s Wikipedia page             |
| -Thornton Wilder                            | -O libelous one                             |
| -Honey*                                     | -My favorite simoniac                       |
| -Lightning Bug*                             | -Jennedy Fucking Kennedy                    |
| -Sprinkle*                                  | -Mmm balls                                  |
| -Anonymous*                                 | -Lanyard*                                   |
| -Sea Serpent*                               | -Sites to Download Movies for Free          |
| -Carriage Door*                             | -Any of the Seven Deadly Sins               |
| -Lake Superior                              | -Any of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse |
| -Lake Erie                                  | -The Talent                                 |
| -Lake Huron                                 | -Peggle 2                                   |
| -Lake Michigan                              | -Pierce Docherty 3                          |

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| -Just Dance 4   | -Arcane Weapon**                                       |
| -Maroon 5   | -Sun-Bleached Ochre*                                   |
| -Porch Ceiling*   | -Tow zone  |
| -Sunburst*, **  | - <u>Very</u> Hungry Caterpillar                       |
| -Evidence of Dawkinsian memetics  | -Mount Craig***  |
| -Mike Ditka   | -Cotton Candy Annie***                                 |
| -Frost Fingers**  | -American Icon***                                      |
| -Psychic Crush**  | -Mr. Bob*** of no determinate gender                   |
| -Glee cast recording of “Closer” by Nine Inch Nails                       | -Instant Coffee*, ***                                  |
| -Artful Dodger  | -Old Ironsides****                                     |
| -Incorrect pinball terminology  | -Played Hard***  |
| -Salmon Stream*   | -Houndmouth***   |
| -Discoteca (Benny Benassi remix)*****                                     | -Gobbo***  |
| -The elliptical   | -Grimble Grumble                                       |
| -Grampus Jet*****   | -Eric Geetle   |
| -Heisenberg   | -Pagliacci   |
| - <a href="https://youtu.be/Gby5Ttz1l-U">https://youtu.be/Gby5Ttz1l-U</a> | -The One Free Man                                      |
| -Unnecessarily well-lit Cinnabon  | -Big Shot  |
| -Cyclamen*  | -The Untouchable                                       |
| -Stimulant  | -Unknown (Alton Towers)****                            |
| -Antidepressant   | -Roller Coaster (Columbia Gardens)****                 |
| -Antistimulant  | -Roller Coaster (Great Yarmouth Pleasure Beach)****    |
| -Unclestimulant   | -Their name but with “Bl-” instead of the first letter |
| -Antihistamine  | -Their name but with “Bl-” instead of EVERY letter     |
| -Antihistayours   | -Fireball*, **, ***, ****, *****                       |
| -Unclehistamine   | -How to Read And Why 🐑                                 |
| -Murphy   |  |

# Section Hate

## The Zhang-Poggi Substance Compass

by Leo Zhang and Jay Poggi,  
peer-reviewed by Isaiah Woods and Nicholas Utakis-Smith



# Section Horse

My super cool omen submission

by Teddy Stahl

## Why 5 hour energy tastes so bad?

I drink a 5 hour energy after an all nighter and I be like >:P !!!! Retweet if you agree and follow the Omen on Instagram @hampshireomen ! Text ya dog this right now and say “I love crazy cats” to the next person you see.

Signed, Teddy Stahl 22F 🐾







HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE  
umni Relations | The Red Barn

'Hampshire Will Go On

the **PVTA**